

Nigeria's Security Challenges and the Crisis of Development: Towards a New Framework for Analysis

Aliyu Mukhtar Katsina*

Department of Political Science, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

This paper develops a new approach towards understanding and explaining the causes behind the prevailing level of insecurity in Nigeria today. Today, the country is in the grip of various destructive forces that are coalescing to give it a failed-status toga. The paper shows that the current state of insecurity is a manifestation of deep-rooted and structurally entrenched crisis of development that creates the environment for the emergence of conditions of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in the country. These, in turn, lead to frustration, alienation and, ultimately, social discontent that spark violence and insecurity. Without the enabling environment, these conditions could not have metamorphosed into serious national security problems threatening to tear the country apart. The findings of the paper show that although Nigeria may appear to be failing, the trends leading to this situation are reversible, if seriously proactive and sustained measures could be adopted by the government and the international community. The implication of this is that policymakers have the duty to arrest this drift through social justice and development. Thus, to address the security problem in Nigeria is in effect, to address its crisis of development.

Keywords: development, security, poverty, unemployment, inequality, conflict, violence

Introduction

The quest for stability and development is, without doubt, the Holy Grail for many third world countries; a never ending, tedious, yet elusive, search for that condition under which these countries would be able to develop institutions and structures with the capacity to ensure economic growth, equitable distribution of national wealth, political stability and accountability. As daunting as these may appear, still it is possible to argue that there is a certain level which all countries, developing and even those that are de-developing, aspire to reach. Each country aspires to a high quality of life for its citizenry, strong and diversified economic base, internal cohesion and political stability. How and to what level these aspirations are attained depend on a number of factors, mostly internal. For one, resources, both natural and human are critical. But the ability to harness these and to utilize them for the common good is principally the domain of technological expertise, administrative capacity as well as political leadership. Consequently, a strong, accountable leadership is necessary. Not many countries, however, have these in abundance especially in Africa. A closely related question for these countries is that of national security defined, both, in terms of their capability to defend their territorial integrity, and more importantly, to ensure internal peace and stability.

To do this successfully, however, requires reduction of threats, actual and potential, that are capable of generating insecurity for the country such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality. It is needless to point that this cannot be realized without development in which these challenges are tackled and properly addressed. Thus, caught in this inextricable tango, the fundamental challenge for the third world countries is simply this: security defined in terms of national development. It is as futile as chasing a shadow for them, to talk of internal security without a corresponding reflection on the question of national development.

For many African countries, this dilemma is even more acute and pronounced. Faced with a growing increase in population explosion (Ogunleye-Adetona, 2010), and a corresponding decrease in economic productivity and political accountability, occasioned by many years of higher level political corruption, bad governance, weak institutions and absence of the wherewithal to transform their human and material resources, these countries turned into veritable incubation centers for the emergence of violent anti-state groups whose deriving ideology, it would seem, is antagonism against their states (Stern & Ojendal, 2010). This ideology, to a greater part, is fuelled by years of the state's neglect and or failure to transform the aspirations of its people for meaningful, purposeful and qualitative life. As a result, de-legitimization process for many of them crept in whereby group loyalty, tribal and or religious, compete with state loyalty on one hand, and on the other hand, albeit the extreme one,

*Email: amkatsina@gmail.com

crime, violence, anarchy, and lawlessness challenge the state's continued cohesion, stability, and territorial integrity.

The objective of this paper is to provide an introductory framework for analysis on the deteriorating level of insecurity in Nigeria over the last ten years. The choice of Nigeria as a case study is informed by at least two major considerations. One, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa (Ucha, 2010). Consequently, its security is a matter of vital strategic interest to other African countries. For indeed, the collapse of instruments of governance in the country will have larger regional security implication for the continent than, say Benin Republic. Two, the repeated failure of the country over the last fifty years to harness and transform its vast human and material resources is a challenge that continues to mystify many. Richly endowed with human and material resources, Nigeria provides an excellent example of how a promising third world country, could through years of political corruption, mismanagement, and poor political institutions, transit from developing to an under-developing and then a de-developing country. In building this framework, this paper integrates the concepts of development and security and shows that in the ultimate, level of national development determines the level of security of a country at any particular time. To illustrate this, the paper proceeds from the view that there is a connection between the concept of national development and national security in which these critical development indicators: poverty, inequality and unemployment level of a country determine its internal security condition. The paper starts with a review of the concepts of development and security where it establishes the nexus between them and proceeds with an analysis of the three important variables of underdevelopment in Nigeria, namely, poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Understanding Development

Development is a relative and mostly contested concept (Hettne, 2010). Nevertheless, it is possible to arrive at some specific indicators of development that are widely acceptable. For instance, it is easy to argue that every human society aspires to strong, efficient and dynamic economic and political institutions that anticipate the yearnings of their people and respond to them accordingly and promptly. It is also possible to argue that in every society there are minimum expectations which all members share. These include access to functional health facilities, access to safe drinking water, universal qualitative education, and equal opportunity for all members in public affairs where competition based on merit is upheld over and above other considerations. All these are universal values that transcend cultural and political

boundaries. Thus, if there is anything actually relative about our conception of development that may largely be because of perspectives from which one chooses to understand it. This is why students so often try to isolate the elements of national development and talk of them as individual topics. Thus, one hears about cultural, social, economic, political, and even religious development as if it is possible to provide a proper analysis of development without integrating these and considering development from a holistic perspective. For instance, Gopinath (2008, p. 91) argues that development can only be measured in monetary terms, and consequently, a developing country is one in which "there is a significant potential to raise the per capita standard of living" of its people. This, no doubt, is the hangover from the intellectual segregation that dominates developmental literature in the 1960s and 1970s when most models of development drew their theoretical sustenance from classical economics. In that conception, economic growth was equated with development and was generally considered as the fundamental objective of the decolonized states of Asia and Africa (Peshkin & Cohen, 1967, p. 11; Salmen, 1991, p. 295).

Even in these isolationist conceptions, it is possible to discern an overriding understanding in which the notion of a qualitative transformation occurs in space and time through the trickle-down effect. Therefore, development is no more than a description of a particular state or physical condition in which there is a corresponding progress in both the physical growth and maturity of a particular object. Applied to human societies, development simply refers to a state, condition or stage, which entails positive transformation in both quantity and quality of life for all members of a particular society. Where there is corresponding decline or retrogression in the quality of life for a significant portion of the population, we describe that as the state of under-development (Rodney, 1972). In effect, development and under-development connotes a relational state in which one mirrors the exact absence of the other.

Mirakhor and Askari (2010, p. 1) write that development means "quantitative growth, qualitative improvement, and expansion in the capabilities, capacities, and choices of individuals, groups or states". Similarly, Tisdell (1988) writes that development is "the modification of the biosphere and the application of human, financial, living and non-living resources to satisfy human needs and improve the quality of life". A distinct thread that permeates these conceptions of development concerns the recognition that improvement on the quality of life of all members of human society is the fundamental objective as well as the primary goal of development. The point here is the emphasis on empowerment and skill

building among members of the society to be able to transform their living conditions. The best, succinct, and analytical conception on development remains that given by Dudley Seers who raises fundamental socio-economic and political questions in his definition and seeks to relate them to human development. According to Seers (1972, p. 124):

The questions to ask about a country's development are... What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from higher levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result 'development,' even, if per capita income doubled.

The emphasis, thus, is on the individual as the integral member of the community; the object of any transformation, not on economic growth based on abstract statistics. It is the position of this paper that this conception of development provides an excellent analytical framework from which a proper explanation on the relationship between development and security can be carried. Instructively, the three indicators, as provided by Seers, form the basis upon which this paper proceeds with its analysis.

Explaining Security

What constitutes security in modern times is a question that has never been answered satisfactorily by scholars. Its perception even within one community varies in time (Ejogba, 2006, p. 305). For instance, until recently, most of the mainstream writings on security studies literally defined it in terms of a state's capabilities to defend its territorial integrity from threats, actual and imagined, as well as acts of aggression from other potential enemies (Okwori, 1995, p. 20). To this end, states build and equip armed forces towards achieving this goal. The main assumption of this conception is that threat of violence, and the actual ability to commit violence by a state, against an enemy successfully deters threats and aggression (Rouke, 2005, p. 308; Alabi, 1997, p. 129). At the domestic level, the belief is that internal law-enforcement agencies and other instruments of domestic intelligence are all that is required for a state to be secured.

There is however, an evident shift on what actually constitutes security in the post-Cold War era. Presently, there is an attempt to broaden it to accommodate other relevant, if not critical, elements within this conception. Issues such as economic development, equality, political accountability and good-governance are now regarded as fundamental to any comprehensive

understanding and explanation on the question of security. Perhaps, this is because of the fact that the conventional militaristic conception of security that dominated the Cold War discourse proved ineffectual and grossly incapable of meeting security expectations among many countries. In this new conception, human development is considered as central (Hettne, 2010; Booth, 2007). Thus, we see in this shift, a new and broader conception in which security entails the capacity of a state to defend itself from external threats with all the necessary means at its disposal, and internal threats through overall socio-economic well-being of its citizenry (Absolute Astronomy, 2011; Tedheke, 1998, p. 6). Here, there is a greater recognition of the relevance of other elements such as political, environmental, economic, and social factors as irreducible components of security of any country (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). Hettne (2010) defines security "as a reasonable level of predictability at different levels of the social system, from local communities to the global level..." The understanding here is that at the global level, there is a presence of an order which is predicated upon the predictability of the behavior of other members within the system. At local level, security thus includes the ability of the state to predict the likely implication of any particular condition on its citizens. The recognition lies squarely not on the state's ability to enforce law and order, though that may be important, but in creating the necessary socio-economic conditions that guarantees fair amount of predictability on the behavior of its citizens. For our purpose, we define security as a state of reduced or contained threats and tension in which the stability of a state is not in an imminent danger of disruption from within and without. Stability is here viewed as the order, regularity and pattern, which characterized the state's condition over an extended period.

Development and Security: The Linkage

The linkage between development and security usually takes one of the following two forms. It can be preventive. Alternatively, it can be promotional (Hettne, 2010). Preventive linkage means prevention of the causes that generate conflict in any particular human society, while promotional linkage or what Hettne (2010) calls "provention" refers to creating the conditions that generate peace in the society by addressing the structural imbalances in the socio-economic conditions of the people, which traditionally are the sources of conflict. In this case, the emphasis will be in identifying and removing the root causes of conflicts in the society such as inequality and mass poverty. In trying to establish a clear nexus between development and security, we need to remember the impossibility of establishing peace

and order in any society in which there exists fundamental contradictions in its economic structure. It is these contradictions, more often, in the third world that provides the manure that nurture and sustain feelings of alienation, marginalization, frustration and resentment among the poor class of the society, and which ultimately translate into anger, radicalization and violence (Oyeshola, 2005, p. 123). In those economies, especially African, where a wide cleavage exists between wealth and income distribution, and in which as a result, poverty and unemployment complement one another on the largest possible scale, there is an evident propensity for the people, especially youth to resort to means, other than lawful and socially accepted, in satisfying their basic needs. Thus, we see parallel to the decline in productivity and equitable income distribution, a corresponding increase in urban crimes such as armed robbery, prostitution, drug peddling, touting, kidnappings, and cultism in institutions of higher learning.

For those countries, like Nigeria, where economic crisis is more acute, and the state risks failure of its institutions of governance, urban crime usually takes secondary stage in relation to the emergence of other violent anti-state groups that seek to supplant the state in obtaining loyalty from the people. The ensuing competition, often violent and bloody, provides the most ample evidence of how (under)development and (in)security always complement each other in all human societies. McNamara (Tedheke, 1998, pp. 6-7) provides an excellent analysis of how development is essentially synonymous with security because “any country that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute food shortages, population explosion, low level of productivity, fragile infrastructural base for technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities and chronic problem of unemployment has false sense of security”. Accordingly, any measure conceived by a state towards addressing the problem of insecurity must start with recognizing that “peace and order are sine-quo-non for the development of any society” (Ode, 2003, p. 136).

Underdevelopment and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Three Variables

From national security perspective, it is possible to make a number of deductions on Nigeria’s threat analysis in the last decade. One, as a sovereign territorial entity, Nigeria faces no existential threat from any of its neighbors, as is the case with, say India and Pakistan, North and South Korea, or Iraq and Kuwait before the first Gulf War. In terms of military and economic capabilities, the country towers over and above all her neighbors in such a

way that declaration of open hostility is practically impossible by any of the sub-Saharan countries. Although, it has for decades, maintained a love-hate relation with her eastern neighbor Cameroon over a disputed territory, the dispute has been eventually resolved by the International Court of Justice, the Hague. Secondly, Nigeria has never been, except during Murtala and Abacha administrations, in an open altercation with any world power strong enough to invade it. But even those altercations with the United States, under Murtala and Abacha, were in our opinion attempts by Nigeria to assert its independence and supremacy in Africa. Consequently, we can describe them as a competition between an established world super power and an emerging continental power for supremacy and hegemony in African affairs. Three, Nigeria’s position and the respect it enjoys in the sub-Saharan Africa, akin to big brother, make it impossible as well as immoral to invade another country in the region. All its military interventions, and they were many, in foreign lands were sanctioned by international law. All these make the argument strong that the major sources of threats to Nigeria’s national security will almost completely remain internal and predicated upon socio-economic and political imbalances. These challenges are structural and deeply embedded in Nigeria’s socio-political and economic institutions over the previous decades. Challenges such as massive corruption, tribalism, poverty, poor governance, near-zero industrial bases, and a single-line economic sector are often described as characteristics of developing countries. While this may be true, it is important to observe that in the case of Nigeria, these characteristics have stayed very long for any purposive drive towards national development. Years of military rule, complemented with an ineffective and corrupt bureaucracy have destroyed, by the end of the last century, any semblance of political accountability and people-oriented leadership.

After 1999, there was a renewed hope and optimism in Nigeria that socio-economic and political challenges of development that have impeded the country’s progress and development would be addressed. A major reason for this optimism was the inauguration of a new democratically elected administration, the first in about two decades (Maier, 2000, p. 65). Twelve years after the first transition, and four general elections, Nigeria’s case could be described as a huge leap from bad to worse (Aniekwe & Kushie, 2011). Today, the country sits on the brink with the brutal reality of state failure staring it in the face. In this period, these aspirations, optimisms, and yearnings that accompanied democracy have turned into disillusion and disenchantment. This anger and frustration is increasingly finding expression in

violent conflicts, inter and intra-tribal and religious, armed groups engagement with the state, as well as ever rising level of urban crimes and insecurity. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that progressively, the state has over the last decade, lost its privileged monopoly of force application. Groups such as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the South-South, Boko-Haram in the Northeast, Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the West, Egbessu Boys in the East, and armed robbers and kidnappers plying its highways with impunity have all given Nigeria the toga of a failing, if not failed, state in this century. To understand how the country is reduced to this sad spectacle is, in essence, to review the narrative of its economic growth and development over the last five decades. This will provide a framework within which the evolution of all manner of internal security threats will best be understood.

"The most pathetic feature of the Nigerian society" argues Osinubi (2003), "is that a majority of its members are living in a state of destitution while the remaining relatively insignificant minority, are living in affluence". Is this because of skewed economic resources, or could there be another explanation? The explanation is political as well as economic. It is economic as far as the fact is concerned that Nigeria has not recorded any substantial economic growth and development in its fifty years of statehood. A remarkable testimony of this is the rate of economic growth from 1965 to 1996, which fluctuated in the range of 0.1% with an average per capita income of \$790, which is far below \$1,060 average for West Africa (Ogunleye-Adetona, 2010, p. 205). Endowed with enormous resources, human and material, Nigeria has consistently betrayed its inability, or probably lack of readiness, to harness these rich resources for its development. One of the top ten crude oil exporters in the world, its economy centers around rent and royalty from oil export with practically non-existent industrial base, therefore its economy is a mono-export oriented. In the period immediately after independence, agriculture and oil earnings accounted for 89% and 2.7% of all foreign earnings. Presently, there is a role reversal in which the agricultural sector, the main-stay of rural economy, is practically killed and crude oil exports accounts for over 90% of all foreign earnings by the dawn of this century (Anonymous, 2002, p. 23). The implication of this is quite clear. It leads to dramatic increase in the urban poverty since most of the unemployed and underemployed rural dwellers migrate to urban centers in search of blue-collar jobs providing a rich reservoir of unskilled labor force (Osinubi, 2003). Meredith (2006, p. 580) summarizes the Nigerian socio-economic condition as follows:

Despite an oil bonanza of \$280 billion, the economy was derelict; public services were

chronically inefficient; schools and hospitals were decaying; higher education had virtually collapsed; roads were pitted with potholes; the telephone system hardly functioned. There were frequent power cuts; even shortages of domestic petroleum supplies. On average, Nigerians were poorer in 2000 than they had been at the start of the oil boom in the early 1970s. Income per head at \$310 was less than one-third of that in 1980. Half of the population lived on less than 30 cents a day; half of the population had no access to safe drinking water. Almost one-fifth of children died before their fifth birthday; nearly half of under-fives were stunted because of poor malnutrition. Millions of people lived in slums surrounded by rotting mounds of garbage, without access to basic amenities.

Based on the human development indices of literacy level, access to safe drinking water and health facilities, nutrition, infant and maternal mortality rates, Nigeria was ranked by the World Bank at the bottom twenty-five in 2009 with countries such as Kenya, Zambia and Ghana ahead of it (Khalid, 2009, p. 35). A similar report in 2010 by the National Bureau of Statistics concluded that over 100 million Nigerians live in abject poverty with less than \$1 per day (BBC, 2012). Instructively, these figures were obtained after the waves of institutional and economic reforms launched by the Obasanjo administration in the late 1999 and early 2000. One could imagine what the figures would be if the reforms were not undertaken at all. For instance, Nigeria's employment index increased from 163 in 2000 to 1867 in 2004 (Aigbokhan, 2008). The effect, which this negative development has on the Nigerian people, is best appreciated in the light of the present level of insecurity prevailing in the country, which arguably is because of the poor management of its economic resources.

We have noted that an explanation on this state of underdevelopment is both political and economic. And we have seen how poor economic development creates a class of poor and disenfranchised majority in the country. What is left for us is to examine the political side of this conundrum. Political development, defined in terms of political accountability and strong and efficient public institutions, is crucial for any detailed study of law, order and development in a third world country. This is because the nature of the relationship between political and human development is such that they are inextricably linked. Where political development is considerably mature with openness and accountability, democratic ethos and principles are bound to guide all process of decision-making and general governance. In pluralistic societies such as Nigeria, this is even more critical, for it provides the necessary environment in which all manner of

socio-cultural and religious tensions can be resolved amicably. Thus, the nature of political institutions and leadership, as well as its grasp of social challenges, dynamism and responsiveness to the aspirations of the people is directly related to the kind of security atmosphere that prevails in the country. If the political leadership proves corrupt and unaccountable, democratic ethos will be repressed and aspirations of the people will be suppressed. In this environment, public interest is subordinate to private political interests of the governing elite. Ultimately, this always leads to a climate of distrust, suspicion, fear and alienation in which the repressed feelings of anger eventually finds expression in violent outlets.

Political developments in Nigeria since independence follows the traditional African trend in which there seems to be an alternating role between the civilian political elites and the military political elites in governing majority of the African states. As a result of this, it is easy to make few inferences with regards to the pattern of power acquisition and its (ab) use in these societies. Generally, elite power politics define public affairs at any point in time, and consequently the disposition of the governing elites defines the behavior of national politics at any period. But the general practice however is one in which politics is defined as a zero-sum game where the winner takes all, rather than a clarion call to nation-building on the principles of equality, tolerance, rule of law and constitutionalism (Tar & Shettima, 2010, pp. 135-136). In fact, the idea of constitutionalism to an average African and especially Nigerian political elite never extends beyond the belief that it is a principle to be violated with impunity. This situation makes democratic practices notoriously difficult to implement (Fafchamps & Vicente, 2009).

In Nigeria, the return to civilian rule in 1999 succeeded to a level, never seen before in its political history, in entrenching the culture of impunity among the political class at all levels of government in which corruption, outright looting of public treasury, flagrant violation of constitutional principles and provisions and violent competition for political supremacy holds sway (Aniekwe & Kushie, 2011, p. 18). Consequently, the greatest implication of this situation, which the political elites engender, besides promoting nepotism, mediocrity, and corruption, also subverts the democratic system, perpetrates electoral fraud, fosters ethnic and religious cleavages in the country for their own political ends, and generally, a sense of aimlessness and confusion as to the exact direction the country is heading. In effect, the political class while concerning itself with corruption fosters the necessary conditions that in the end provoke the present security threats in the country. In the succeeding sections, this essay

critically looks at three important variables that define the nexus between development and security in Nigeria. These are poverty, in equality and mass unemployment. The idea, it is worth mentioning here, is to show that these indicators are actually the fundamental security threats which have engender insecurity in the country today.

Poverty

As a social concept, poverty is often defined in relative terms. This is because it is a situational problem in which needs varies from one society to another, or even within the same society over a specific period. This creates a serious problem of conceptualization as to which condition is exactly the condition of poverty, who is a poor person and what are the basic indices of measuring poverty in any given society? Gopinath (2008, p. 103) defines poverty from an individual's perspective as the lack of healthy food, clothing, and shelter. This definition does not provide much in terms of shedding light on a comprehensive meaning of poverty. Aigbakhon (2008, p. 13) defines poverty "as a state of long-term deprivation of well-being, a situation considered inadequate for decent living". The problem with this definition is in determining what is considered as a decent living for an average person. Even without much of an emphasis, it is certainly obvious that the idea of decent living has significantly different connotations to an average African from an average American. It is for this reason that we shall narrow down our scope on poverty to those necessities of life that are applicable in all modern societies. These are access to universal and qualitative education, safe drinking water, affordable health care and sanitary facilities, nutrition, shelter and clothing. Taking these as indices of poverty is however not adequate. For while in some societies, poor persons have access to all these and therefore, take them for granted, in other societies, these are luxuries that are obtained by handful. Nevertheless, we consider poverty in its broadest form to mean a situation where majority members of a country lack access to these indices that make their life distinguishable from that of animals. Adelman (1986, p. 49) argues that abject poverty is a level "so severe that it stunts the attainment of human potential". It is therefore the view of this essay that the realization of these indices leads to the attainment of human potentials. Conversely, their absence among a great number of persons affects their ability to realize their human potentials.

As an introductory analytical framework, it is important to note that this essay is severely limited in its access to verifiable data on poverty and the other indicators it intends to review in Nigeria. Its postulations are therefore generic rather than specific. It is however of the view that this does not

detract in any way the fundamental objective of the essay. A study titled *Growth, Inequality and Poverty in Nigeria* (2008) prepared for the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa (UNECA) by Prof. Aigbakon, points that poverty level increased in Nigeria from 27.2% in 1980 to 65.6% in 1996, an increase of about 141.2%. In absolute terms, the reports observes that the number of poor rose from 67 million in 1996 to 68.7 million in 2004, with the urban poor increasing to about 40% and the rural poor to about 60%. By 2010, it is believed that about 70% of Nigerians live under \$1 per day, no less than 92% of the total population live on less than \$2 per day (CIA World Book, 2011; Ucha, 2010). These figures generally represent the level of poverty in Nigeria, but in reality, do not capture its depths. Its depth can best be seen from the thousands of urban slums that criss-crossed the country in which millions live in infested conditions without access to sanitary facilities, drinking water, medical care or affordable education for their children. So deplorable is the condition in terms of shelter for example, a whole family of ten or more lives cramped in a single room without ever hoping to escape from the clutches of abject poverty. The streets of urban areas provide another mirror that captures the depth of poverty in Nigeria. On these streets, children of school age hawk, young women prostitute, young men peddle drugs and tout in motor-parks, and the aged and physically challenged beg for sustenance.

The question to ask at this stage is just how dangerous are these figures to Nigeria's stability, peace, and progress? And how does poverty explain insecurity? We cannot hope to answer this question here, without first looking at the other two indicators of development and security in Nigeria namely, unemployment and inequality.

Unemployment

It is quite difficult to talk of poverty without talking about unemployment. An explanation for this is the fact that they reinforce each other. Thus, poverty may be described as arising out of the lack of gainful employment opportunities for members of the society. In Nigeria, unemployment is one of the most enduring social problems (Aigbakhon, 2010, p. 14). Employment means the number of people working for wages, in cash or in kind, in public and private enterprises. This includes those that are gainfully self-employed. On the other hand, unemployment refers to the number of people, skilled and unskilled, in any given political entity without work. In talking about unemployment, distinction is often made between those that are unemployed and those that are unemployable. Unemployed refers to skilled labor force that could not find gainful employment opportunities, while

unemployable refers to those, who lacking in the necessary skills, cannot find jobs. In the long run, this distinction became moot, for both instances point to a fundamental failure on the part of the government, in the case of unemployable, to equip them with the necessary skills that will enable them become gainfully employed, and in the case of unemployed, to create the necessary environment, through policy instruments, for meaningful employment opportunities in both private and public sectors.

The labor force in Nigeria is today skewed in such a way that employment opportunities are literally impossible to exist. Agricultural sector absorbed about 70% of the labor force, with industry and service sectors absorbing 10% and 20% respectively. A complete picture however emerges when we understand that the agricultural sector contributes no more than 30% GDP, and that oil exports accounts for over 95% of all revenues of the country (CIA World Book, 2011). It is easy to see, therefore, that the agricultural and service sectors are over bloated, and this consequently creates a huge unemployment pool in which out of over 90 million who are able to work, skilled and unskilled, over 70 million Nigerians are completely without any work (El-Rufai, 2011). For a country of about 152 million people, this condition ought to be quite alarming. An even more confounding situation is the fact that the labor market is ever expanding with about 3 million people joining annually (El-Rufai, 2011).

The cumulative effect of this situation on Nigeria's socio-economic and political development is beyond the scope of our discourse. Suffice it here to make few observations. One, most of those affected by unemployment in Nigeria represents the most productive segment of its population, those between the ages of 21-40. Two, it also means that well over 70 million Nigerians cannot meet their basic responsibilities in their own society. Three, the fact that Nigeria has the resources to transform its economy, create favorable conditions for small and medium scale industries that can absorb this huge labor force, creates a serious situation in which the people became disillusioned with the Nigerian state and its capability to promote their welfare.

Inequality

Studies on poverty and inequality generally tend to limit their analyses to income disparity among social classes in a given country. Obvious in this is the apparent relegation of other indicators of inequality such as social and political exclusion at individual, local and national levels. A probable explanation may be that political and social inequalities are much more difficult to measure, evaluate and verify. Income inequality grows often with economic growth in most African countries

because most of them do not have strong, efficient and capable institutions that can ensure income distribution equitably among their people (Aigbakhon, 2008). In Nigeria, the nature of its economy entrenches inequality. We have already noted that the economy is primarily export oriented, oil producing, and royalty collecting one. Because of this, a wide gulf exists between a tiny minority who have access to the oil revenues and the majority of Nigerians who continue to wallow in abject poverty. Consequently, together with a huge percentage of Nigerians that is excluded almost completely from enjoying the benefits accruing from oil wealth, resentment and anger is building among the economically excluded groups. Muller and Seligson (1987) argue that a high level of income inequality in a country increases the possibility of violence against the state for at least two reasons. The number of alienated persons in the society that can easily mobilize is great. And two, it is possible for the groups that emerge out of this frustration to establish alliances with others sharing same values. At the present in Nigeria, the result of this is the emergence of many militant anti-state groups such as Boko-Haram and MEND.

Nevertheless, the question that ought to be asked, as far as inequality is concerned in Nigeria, is the effect which income inequality has on social and political relations. The military intervention in the political process of the early 1980s was conditioned to a significant extent by what was widely believed to be the deepening polarization of the Nigerian state between two classes. These classes were the political class that cornered power and appropriated public resources for their own personal aggrandizement and the remaining populace who suffered the consequences of those acts. So bad was the situation that Imobighe (1984, p. 41) observes that the level of inequality created through deliberate policies of social and political exclusion led to a heightened state of insecurity that culminated in the overthrow of the civilian administration on the last day of 1983. The succeeding military administrations in the ensuing years almost collectively succeeded in entrenching politics of exclusion in which certain privileged class that transcended regional, cultural and religious boundaries emerged as the new power broker in the country. Two common denominators of this class was, and still remain, its unfettered access to state resources and its exclusive control over the levers of political power in the country. Democracy succeeded in legitimizing the hold over power that this class exerts. In all corners of the country the phenomena of "Godfathers", rigging and vote buying actually substituted for the exercise of popular will and choice in electing public officials. As a result of this politics of exclusion, a deeper psychological and social inequality is fostered among the citizenry part of

the implication of which, today is the total loss of confidence in the democratic experiment, and great disenchantment among most citizens with the government. Unlike, in advanced societies where economic power offers political leverage, in Nigeria the reverse obtains, with one dominant social class determining, to use the words of Harold Lasswell, who gets what, when and how. Therefore, economic problems including poverty, unemployment and inequality, structural politics of exclusion, and a discriminating social system in which an individual will never realize his potentials without a "godfather" provide the cannon fodder of radicalization, social tension, conflict, violence, and the ultimate break down of law and order as we are presently witnessing in Nigeria (Oyeshola, 2005, p. 123).

Insecurity in Nigeria: Connecting the dots

In the fore-going paragraphs, this essay tried to establish an analytical framework within which the current security situation in Nigeria can best be studied and explained. It is the view of this essay that these security threats are not isolated cases, but rather part of the unraveling process which if not handled properly will eventually consumed the country. The argument of comprehensive security is fundamentally predicated upon strong and sustainable national development in which problems of inequality, social exclusion, and poverty are properly addressed. At this stage, we can only hope to make certain, albeit generic, observations concerning threats. The aim is to establish how poverty, inequality, and unemployment, the three major indicators of underdevelopment reviewed here translate into potent threats tearing Nigeria apart in the twenty-first century.

It is axiomatic to say that there is hardly a country without one security threat or another, just as it is hard to find a state that can completely eradicate all threats to its security (Ukpabi, 1986, p. 147). Nevertheless, a proper threat perception and analysis allows a country manages its threats properly by allocating resources to the needed areas. Imobighe (Alabi, 1997, p. 140) defines threat as "anything that can undermine the security of the nation, or anything that constitutes danger to its survival as a corporate entity, as well as undermine the prospects of the harmonious relationship of the various communities that make up the nation, or the peaceful co-existence of its people". Poverty, unemployment, and inequality are, without doubt, threats to Nigeria's peace and stability not so much on how many people are affected at any point in time but in what they breed among the affected people. One, the threat is in the capacity to erode patriotic feelings among the people. It is not a point of debate to say that in a situation, as Nigeria's, where the people are convinced that their country

has the wherewithal to develop and transform their miserable conditions of living but is unwilling or incapable to do that, the people will not be patriotic or even retain nationalistic feelings. Two, related to erosion of patriotism is the building-up of angst and resentment among the alienated majority against the state and its institutions.

The manifestations of these often began with innocuous actions such as traffic violation before it takes greater and more dangerous dimensions where respect to lawful authority is rejected. Three, concordant to these two conditions is the grooming of a mass of people, often youth, who are frustrated with their wretched life and who discover that by rejecting and in fact, fighting the government, they have nothing to lose. These conditions ultimately snowballed into a situation in which security is no longer important for anybody in the country except the ruling class who needs the apparatus of state to continue with their plunder of public resources. The situation in Nigeria since the beginning of this century in which dozens of militant groups emerged and challenged in the most violent form the authority of the state; the growing level of urban crime including armed robbery, kidnappings, ritual killings, and cultism; the continuing erosion of the moral authority of religions in which people engage in acts in open defiance of their religious and moral teachings; the culture of impunity that characterizes public affairs; the corruption that has become the landmark of public and political class; the crippling poverty that is submerging the average Nigerian; and the collapsing social and political institutions in the country over the last ten years, more than anything point to a gross threat misperception on the part of the government for a very long time.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the paper argue that so long as we continue to treat the issue of national security separately from the issue of national development in which challenges of poverty, inequality, unemployment, social exclusion on account of tribe and religion are not tackled proactively, the problem of insecurity will remain very much alive and will continue to plague the country. This applies to other developing countries, especially in Africa, that are grappling with the challenges of economic growth and development, political reforms and democratization. This framework, though designed with Nigeria in view, recognized the similarity of the challenges which most other African countries face today. Wide and institutionalized poverty, social inequality and injustice, stagnant economic growth and development, half-hearted political reforms, shabby democratization processes, corrupt and despotic leadership have remain some of the glaring

landmarks for most African countries. As a result, youth restiveness and violence, social instability, and conflicts have continued to plague them.

Following this discourse, we can at least propose the following important observations. First, for developing countries like Nigeria therefore, national security is synonymous with national development, and treating them as separate subjects is not only counter-productive, but is fraught with danger. As such, policymakers need to appreciate this important fact, and start taking the necessary steps and building the institutions that could truly ensures justice, accountability and development in their countries. Otherwise, all measures designed to address insecurity will remain futile. Second, the international community cannot afford to remain impervious to issues related to social justice, political reforms, democracy and good governance in the developing countries. These remain central to peace, progress and sustainable development, and by extension, global peace. The involvement of the developed world in all spheres that promote these themes in the developing world is very important. Situations where world powers, for strategic reasons, blind themselves to gross human rights violations, bad governance, corruption, social injustice and inequality among their third world allies do no one any good. For in the end, it nourishes the conditions that endanger the global peace. Therefore, helping developing states like Nigeria by insisting on good practice by its leaders through good governance, genuine democratization process, and accountable political leadership, is a collective international obligation.

References

- Absolute Astronomy (2011). *National security*. Retrieved 17 October 2011 from: http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/National_security
- Adelman, I. (1986). A poverty-focused approach to development policy. in Lewis, J. P. and Kallab, V. (eds.). (1986). *Development strategies reconsidered*. Washington DC: Overseas Development Council.
- Ajakaiye, D. O. & Adeyeye, V. A. (n.d.). *Concepts, measurement and causes of poverty*. Retrieved, 15 September, 2011 from: http://www.cenbank.org/out/publications/efr/rd/2002/efrvol3_9-4-5.pdf.
- Aigbokhan, B. E. (2008). *Growth, inequality, and poverty in Nigeria*. ACGS/MPAMS Discussion Paper No. 3. Retrieved, 12 June 2010 from: <http://uneca.org/acgd/mdgs/GrowthInequalityPoverty.pdf>.
- Alabi, D. O. (1997). Issues and problems in the Nigerian defence policy in the 1990s: A critical review. *Nigerian Army Journal*, 9(3), 128-143.
- Aniekwe, C. C. & Kushie, J. (2011). *Electoral violence situational analysis: Identifying hot-spots in 2011 general elections in Nigeria*. Retrieved 13 March 2011 from: http://nevr.org/media/resources/Nigeria_Electoral_Violence_Situational_Analysis.pdf.
- Anonymous (2002), *Analysis Magazine* 1(3), September, 2002.
- BBC (2012). Nigerians living in poverty rise to nearly 61%, 13 February 2012, Retrieved 19 September 2012 from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17015873>

- Booth, K. (2007). *Theory of world security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, B. & Hansen, L. (2009). *The evolution of international security studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CIA World Fact-Book. (2011). *Nigeria*. Retrieved 9 Nov-2011 from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html#top>
- Ejogba, O. A. (2006). African security in the twenty-first century. *Nigerian Forum: A Journal of Opinion on World Affairs*, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, 27, (9-10), 303-319.
- El-Rufa'i, N. A. (2011). *Where are the jobs?* Retrieved 9 September 2011 from: <http://saharareporters.com/articles/where-are-jobs-nasir-ahmad-el-rufai>
- Fafchamps, M. & Vicente, P. C. (2009). *Political violence and social networks: Experimental evidence from a Nigerian election*. Retrieved 13 March 2011 from: <http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/workingpapers/pdfs/2009-14text.pdf>
- Gopinath, C. (2008). *Globalization: A multidimensional system*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Hettne, B. (2010). Development and security: Origins and future. *Security Dialogue*, 41(1), 31-52.
- Imobighe, T. A. (1984). Chasing the shadow: The illusory battle for law, order, and security in Nigeria. (in) Mohammed, S. & Tony, E. (eds.). (1984). *Nigeria: a republic in ruins*. Zaria: ABU Press.
- Khalid, S. (2009). Poverty eradication and the challenge of development in Nigeria. *Development review: Journal of Centre for Development Research and Advocacy*. 1(1), 35-43. CDRA, Kaduna.
- Maier, K. (2000). *This house has fallen: Nigeria in crisis*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Meredith, M. (2006). *The state of Africa: A history of fifty years of independence*. London: Free Press.
- Mirakhor, A. & Askari, H. (2010). *Islam and the path to human and economic development*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Muller, E. N. & Seligson, M. A. (1987). Inequality and insurgency. *American Political Science Review*, 81 (2), 425-450.
- Ode, I. O. (2003). An assessment of the activities of vigilante group in Nigeria: The case of Makurdi Town of Benue State. (in) Jike, V. I. (ed.). (2003). *The Nigeria Police and the crisis of law and order: a book of readings*. Lagos: NISS.
- Ogunleye-Adetona, C. I. (2010). Human resources and economic resources in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12(3), 204-211.
- Okwori, A. S. (1995). Security and deterrence: Towards alternative deterrence strategy For Nigeria in the 21st century and beyond. *Defence Studies: Journal of the Nigerian Defence Academy*, Kaduna, 5, 19-28.
- Osinubi, T. S. (2003). *Urban poverty in Nigeria: a case study of Agege Area in Lagos State, Nigeria*. Retrieved 9 November 2011 from: <http://depot.gdnet.org/newkb/fulltext/osinubi.pdf>.
- Oyeshola, D. (2005). *Conflict and context of conflict resolution*. Ile-Ife: OAU Press.
- Peshkin, A. & Cohen, R. (1967). The values of modernization. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 2(1), 7-22.
- Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. London: Bugle L-Ouverture.
- Rourke, J. T. (2005). *International politics on the world stage* (10th ed.). New York: MacGraw Hill.
- Salmen, L. (1991). Reducing poverty. *Public administration and development*, 11(3), 295-302.
- Seers, D. (1972). The meaning of development. (in) Uphoff, N. T. & Ilchman, W. F. (eds.). (1972). *The political economy of development: Theoretical and empirical contributions*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Stern, M. & Ojendal, J. (2010). Mapping the security-development nexus: Conflict, complexity, cacophony, convergence? *Security Dialogue*, 41(1), 5-29.
- Tar, U. A. & Shettima, A. G. (2010). Hegemony and subordination: Governing class, power politics and electoral Democracy in Nigeria. *Information, Society and Justice*, 3(2), 135-149.
- Tedheke, M. E. U. (1998). Defence and security in Nigeria: Beyond the rhetorics. *Defence Studies: Journal of the Nigerian Defence Academy*, Kaduna, 8, 1-22.
- Tisdell, C. (1988). Sustainable development: Differing perspectives of ecologists and economists, and relevance to LDCs. *World Development*, 16(3), 373-384.
- Ucha, C. (2010). Poverty in Nigeria: Some dimensions and contributing factors. *Global Majority E-Journal*, 1, (1), 46-56.
- Ukpabi, S. C. (1986). *Strands in Nigerian military history*. Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation.